

Huw Irranca-Davies MS
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs
Welsh Government
5th Floor
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

09 May 2024

Dear Mr Davies

I am writing to congratulate you on your new role as Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs and to offer our renewed support to the Welsh Government's ambitions for trees and woodland.

The Institute of Chartered Foresters is the professional body for forestry in the UK. Our membership covers the full range of tree professionals and this range of expertise is one of our greatest strengths. We have over 2,000 members who practice the art and science of forestry in the private and third sectors, central and local government, research institutions, universities and colleges throughout the UK. Our role is to maintain standards and raise awareness of how trees and woodlands can deliver for society.

The forestry sector is an integral part of the Welsh rural economy and deserves support in its own right. Our members would like to see Government champion the use of timber and wood products, uncovering the obstacles to woodland creation, supporting urban forestry and tackling negative media coverage. We are concerned that the intricacies of forestry and its interconnections with our associated sectors, such as agriculture, are often misunderstood – leading to debates that lack balance and expertise. It is crucial to educate people about the nuances of professional forestry and underscore our role in reducing offshoring dependency and the pivotal role forestry must play in addressing the climate, nature, and timber crises. This includes recognition for our trees outside of woodlands and the multifaceted benefits of woodland creation, including biodiversity, carbon and temperature regulation.

As the UK's professional body, we can offer a balanced viewpoint, acting as a partner and facilitator, with a proven track record of spearheading collaborative initiatives to produce objective and evidence-based policy work. We encourage you to utilise our expertise – as a sounding board, a balanced voice, or a critical friend - to share communications, canvass sector opinions and inform policy discussions. Our Welsh Member Network is highly active and engaged across a wide range of interests.

I look forward to discussing the ways in which we can better support you and your team.

Yours sincerely



Louise Simpson
Executive Director
Institute of Chartered Foresters